



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

**NW Fisheries
Science Center**

Peer Review Process Review

Owen S. Hamel

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Overview

- Objectives and Goals
- Stock assessment review (STAR) panel process
- SSC groundfish subcommittee review process
- SSC review process
- Characteristics of the review process
- Strengths, Challenges, Solutions



Objectives and Goals

- Meet the mandates of the MSA;
- Independent external review;
- Ensure assessments represent best available scientific information;
- Provide clear and concise results to facilitate adoption of OFLs, ABCs, ACLs, and other appropriate management measures;
- Provide measure of assessment uncertainty for determining the scientific buffer between the OFL and ABC
- Increase understanding and acceptance of stock assessments and peer reviews by the Council, industry, and interested parties;
- Identify research needed to improve assessments and management;
- Provide for efficient use of assessment and review resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

- SSC:
 - Provide STAR panel chair (and, occasionally, second reviewer)
 - Review post-STAR assessment document and STAR panel report
 - Provide advice to Council
- SSC groundfish subcommittee:
 - Review update and data poor assessments, rebuilding analyses and any assessments sent to end-of-year panel
- Pacific Fishery Management Council:
 - Provide GMT and GAP STAR panel representatives
 - Council staff member to advise STAR panel/end-of-year panel
- Science Centers:
 - Logistics for STAR panels and reviewers



STAR panel process

- The Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel conducts a detailed technical evaluation of benchmark assessments.
- Transparent, rigorous and independent review.
- Two species per STAR panel for benchmark assessments (in general)
- Many more data-moderate assessments can be reviewed (4-8) in a single STAR panel



STAR chair responsibilities

- Ensure participants follow Terms of Reference (TORs).
- Keep panel in review mode, not workshop mode.
- Guide STAR panel and stock assessment team to mutually agreeable solutions to issues.
- Coordinate review of revised document following STAR panel.



STAR reviewer selection

- Mix of internal and external reviewers
 - Chair of panel is SSC member
 - CIE reviewers (usually two)
 - Endeavour to have one CIE reviewer across all STAR panels in a single year
 - One or more other reviewers with knowledge of west coast fisheries and/or modeling approaches
 - GMT and GAP representatives and Council staff member attend STAR panel



STAR panel review

- Ensure assessments represent best available scientific information
 - Request and review additional runs with alternative assumptions/approaches
 - Request and review additional diagnostics
- Identify research needed to improve assessment and management



Reviews by SSC groundfish subcommittee

- Updates
 - Make sure no changes to model
 - Check to see if any substantial changes in data (other than new years of data)
 - Compare outcome and diagnostics of update with previous full or update assessment
- Data-poor assessments
 - Review:
 - Choice of data-poor model
 - Justification for Bayesian priors



End-of-year Panel

- Occurs on an as-needed basis
- Groundfish Subcommittee + 1 CIE reviewer review:
 - Assessments sent to panel by SSC and/or Council
 - Full assessments have previous STAR-panel review.
 - As would any data-moderate assessments sent here.
 - Updates have previous SSC GG subcommittee review.
 - As would any data-poor assessments sent here.
 - Main issues are laid out from previous reviews and Council direction.
 - Entirety of assessments are reviewable, as STAR panel.



Review of Rebuilding Analyses

SSC Groundfish Subcommittee

or

End-of-year panel review:

- Rebuilding Program
- Assumptions
- Approach to uncertainty (Bayesian posterior, profile over a parameter, decision table)

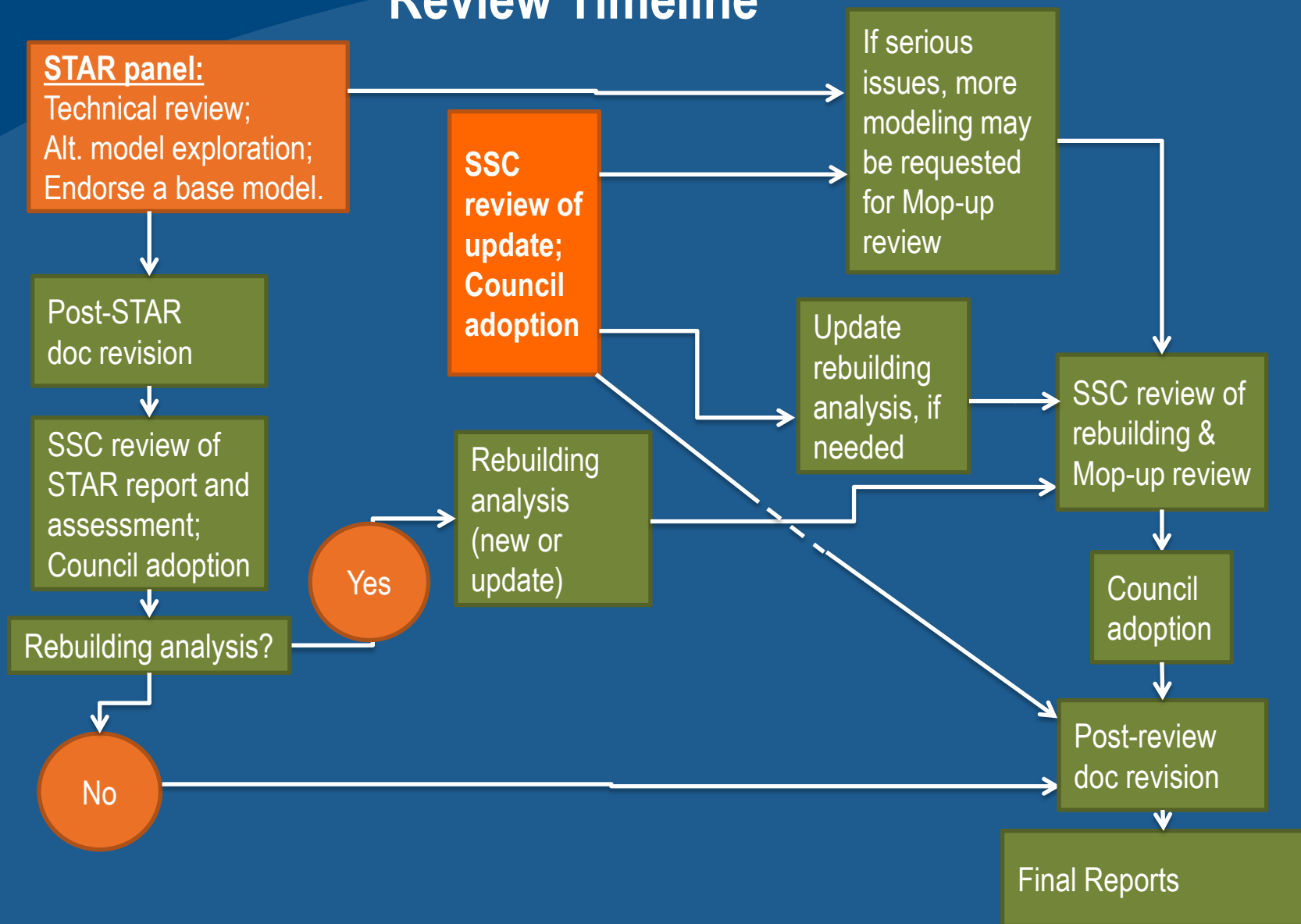


SSC review

- Final check on assessment
- Review STAR panel report and rationale for conclusions and recommended research
- Final recommendation to Council



Benchmark, Data-Moderate and Update Assessment Review Timeline



Review characteristics

- Avoidance of conflict-of-interest
 - CIE vigilant about conflict-of-interest
 - Other Non-federal reviewers screened according to NOAA policy;
- Independence
 - SSC members who work in the same division/office as assessments authors are precluded from serving as reviewers
 - STAR panel members recuse themselves at SSC meetings
- Transparency
 - Review meetings noticed in the federal register and on PFMC website
 - Documents available to reviewers and public two weeks prior to review
 - Time is set aside for public comment at all meetings.



Review characteristics

- Thoroughness
 - Entirety of draft models and documents reviewed by STAR panel and SSC. GMT, CAP and Council staff representatives help ensure raw data are correct and assumptions are reasonable.
- Efficiency
 - The STAR panel takes place over a single week. The STAR reports and revised draft assessments are available and reviewed at the next Council meeting.
- Overall Quality of Review
 - Independent, knowledgeable and engaged reviewers in the STAR and Council process, and the multi-layered review ensure thorough and high-quality reviews.



Review characteristics

Throughput

- STAR-process output is highly constrained by available:
 - Reviewers
 - Scheduling constraints
 - May – July window



The Disappearing Review Window

2015 STAR Panel Schedule - Discussion Draft

April

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	X	X	X	X	X	9
10	X	X	X	X	X	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			X	X	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	X	X	X	X	X	8
9	X	X	X	X	X	15
16	X	X	X	X	X	22
23	X	X	X	X	X	29
30	31					

September

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Council meeting



Briefing Book Deadline for next Council meeting

Proposed STAR Panel Week



Holiday

Too early – too late

No 4-day weeks

No BB weeks

BB lead time



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Strengths, Challenges and Solutions

- Strengths
 - Thorough, independent, transparent reviews meeting the requirements of the MSA and providing information necessary for decision making
- Challenges
 - Limited number of slots to review benchmark assessments in STAR panels limits number of adequate assessments that can be reviewed each year
- Solutions
 - Data moderate assessments require less review time
 - Updates allow for renewing benchmarks periodically
 - Continually investigating new methods/approaches

